

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Congressman John Conyers, Jr.**

**Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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**CONTACT:  
Danielle Brown: (202) 225-6906**

### **CONYERS APPLAUDS IBEW ENDORSEMENT OF COMPETITION IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Today, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, issued the following statement regarding IBEW's endorsement of competition in telecommunications:

"IBEW's decision to embrace competition in telecommunications is a win-win for working people, and represents the enlightened approach for organized labor.

The 1996 Telecom Act -- which mandates competition in the telephone network, a ratepayer-built legacy monopoly facility -- has created over \$150 billion worth of investments in new networks, tens of thousands of new jobs, and over a billion dollars of consumers savings for 10 million customers. All of this means more opportunities for working Americans in an expanding marketplace. IBEW members have been turned into modern-day journey men as a result of this new wave of investment.

By contrast, the Bell companies, with nearly 42% earnings and record profits, are laying off over 20,000 employees. This surely results from an effort by the Bells to outsource and automate, as so many local unions have pointed out in the last year.

Competition democratizes the telecom sector for both the workers in the industry and for consumers who are being gouged by the Bells with ever increasing rates. Organized labor should resist falling prey to a "Stockholm syndrome" and refuse to endorse myopic pro-monopoly positions which will hurt working Americans in the long run.

The future is not with the robber barons but with competition. As usual, Ed Hill has shown visionary leadership in this respect.